

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 1890

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NO OVIP (KISSINGER HENRY A.)

SUBJ: SECVISIT: OVERVIEW: SECRETARY'S VISIT TO NORWAY

1. OBJECTIVES OF VISIT

THE NORWEGIANS LOOK ON YOUR VISIT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE U.S. INTEREST IN NORWAY AND COMMITMENT TO HER SECURITY. THOUGH THE NORWEGIANS ARE STAUNCH MEMBERS OF THE ALLIANCE, THEY RECOGNIZE THE U.S. AS THE BACKBONE OF NATO AND FUNDAMENTALLY RELY ON THEIR STRONG BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. FOR THEIR SECURITY. IN THIS WEALTHY, MODERN YET REMARKABLY TRADITIONAL AND INSULAR SOCIETY, PEOPLE ARE FOREVER ASKING THEMSELVES ABOUT THE STRENGTH OF THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO NORWAY AND AMERICA'S WILL TO MEET THE COMMITMENT. ONE CAN EASILY UNDERSTAND THEIR CONCERN GIVEN NORWAY'S EXPOSED GEOGRAPHIC POSITION AND THE AWESOME OFFENSIVE STRENGTH BASED AT THE USSR'S KOLA/MURMANSK MILITARY COMPLEX. NORWAY'S PHYSICAL SEPARATION FROM CONTINENTAL EUROPE HAS ALSO MADE IT HISTORICALLY RATHER INSULAR IN OUTLOOK, WITH MANY NORWEGIANS RELATIVELY UNCONCERNED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS ELSEWHERE IN THE ALLIANCE.

ONE OF YOUR CENTRAL OBJECTIVES, THEREFORE, SHOULD BE TO REASSURE THE NORWEGIANS, IN PRIVATE AND IN YOUR PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF OUT CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO THEIR SECURITY AND OUR ABILITY TO DEFEND THE NORTHERN FLANK. AT THE SAME TIME YOU SHOULD TRY TO BROADEN NORWEGIAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE ALLIANCE, SPECIFICALLY TO INCREASE THEIR AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUTHERN FLANK

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TO OVERALL ALLIANCE SECURITY. YOU WILL WANT TO REVIEW WITH THEM

OUR VIEWS ON SPANISH DEVELOPMENTS, AND CONGRATULATE THEM ON THEIR CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN PORTUGAL.

THE NORWEGIANS ARE EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN OUR STUDY ON SVALBARD, WHICH THEY ASSURE WILL BE CONCLUDED IN TIME FOR YOUR TALKS HERE. AFTER SOME INITIAL HESITATION, THEY HAVE RECENTLY STARTED THE RUSSIONS DOWN ON A MINOR CONFRONTATION ON SVALBARD AND SHOULD BE CONGRATULATED FOR HAVING STOOD FIRM. OUR SUPPORT FOR NORWEGIAN POLICIES VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIET UNION, ESPECIALLY THE SVALBARD ASPECT, WILL BE HIGH ON THE LIST OF SUBJECTS NORWEGIAN OFFICIALS WANT TO DISCUSS DURING YOUR VISIT.

NORWAY HAS STILL NOT ADHERED TO THE IEA LONG-TERM PROGRAM (LTP), HAVING BEEN ALL ALONG A RELUCTANT ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF IEA. POLITICAL PRESSURES, NOT DISSIMILAR FROM THOSE LOOSED BY THE NATIONAL DEBATE IN 1972, ARE BUILDING TO KEEP NORWAY OUT OF THE LTP. YOU WILL WANT TO STRESS TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO NORWAY'S EARLY ADHERENCE.

THE NORWEGIANS WILL ALSO WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS ON A NUMBER OF OTHER ISSUES SUCH AS THE STATE OF U.S. -SOVIET RELATIONS, OUR RELATIONS WITH THE LDC'S IN THE WAKE OF YOUR SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION INITIATIVES AND THE UNCTAD CONFERENCE; DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA; THE MIDDLE EAST; CHINA; AND OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE PROSPECTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LOS CONFERENCE THIS YEAR.

2. THE SETTING

NORWAY IS ONE OF THE MOST STABLE, STRADITION-BOUND AND HISTORICALLY INSULAR NATIONS OF EUROPE. NEUTRALISM IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DISAPPEARED ONLY WITH THE GERMAN OCCUPATION OF NORWAY DURING WORLD WAR II AND, ALTHOUGH BUFFETED BY FORCES OF CHANGE, NEW IDEAS PENETRATE SLOWLY HERE. THE ENTIRE NATION WAS TORN APART BY AN EMOTIONAL AND DIVIDED 1972 DEBATE OVER WHETHER TO JOIN THE COMMON MARKET. MEMBERSHIP WAS VOTED DOWN IN A NATIONAL REFERENDUM, A DEVELOPMENT WHICH CAUGHT EUROPE, THE UNITED STATES AND MANY NORWEGIANS BY SURPRISE AND WHICH CAN ONLY BE EXPLAINED BY A WIDELY HELD BELIEF THAT NORWAY WOULD BE SURRENDERING SOVEREIGNTY IF SHE JOINED THE EC. TODAY'S DEBATE ON THE IEA

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HAS A SIMILAR RING TO IT. THE LABOR PARTY HAS DOMINATED THE NORWEGIAN POLITICAL SCENE SINCE 1935, RULING FOR 33 OF THE PAST 40 YEARS. ITS POWER BASE HAS BEEN FOUNDED ON THEE LARGE WELL-ORGANIZED LABOR MOVEMENT AND ITS ESPOUSAL OF PROGRESSIVE SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS FOR ALL NORWEGIANS. HIGH PROSPERITY AND ENLIGHTENED SOCIAL POLICIES HAVE HELPED AVOID LABOR UNREST AND ALLOWED CONSENSUS GOVERNMENT WITH BORAD PUBLIC SUPPORT.

BUT THE LABOR PARTY'S VERY SUCCESSES IN ACHIEVING A HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING FOR NORWEGIANS HAVE RECENTLY CONTRIBUTED TO A DECLINE IN PARTY STRENGTH AS ITS TRADITIONAL CONSTITUENCY BECOMES INCREASINGLY MIDDLE CLASS, BOURGEOIS AND LESS ATTRACTED BY THE PARTY'S SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY. ANOTHER FACTOR ACCOUNTING FOR DISCONTENT AMONG THE PARTY FAITHFUL AND A POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS ISSUE FOR LABOR IN THE SEPTEMBER QO77 NATIONAL ELECTIONS IS THE GROWING RESENTMENT OF GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE IN THE DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES OF THE INDIVIDUAL. SINCE 1973 AS WELL AS ON SEVERAL EARLIER

OCCASIONS, LABOR HAS HAD TO GOVERN AS A MINORITY PARTY, RULING THROUGH A SHIFTING COALITION, SUPPORTED ON FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICIES BY THE CONSERVATIVE CENTER/RIGHT AND ON DOMESTIC ISSUES BY THE LEFT OR THE FAR LEFT.

UNTIL TRYGVE BRATTELI LEFT OFFICE IN JANUARY 1976, HE HELD THE POSITION OF LABOR PARTY CHAIRMAN AS WELL AS PRIME MINISTER. WHEN BRATTELI LEFT OFFICE, THE PARTY DECIDED TO SPLIT THE TWO JOBS AS IT HAD IN THE PAST, GIVING THE MODERATE PRO-NATO ODVAR NORDLI THE PRIME MINISTRY AND REIEULF STEEN, AN AMBITIOUS PARTY FUNCTIONARY, THE PARTY CHAIRMANSHIP. STEEN, A YOUTHFUL LEFT-LEANING FORMER JOURNALIST WITH STRONG SUPPORT IN THE LABOR YOUTH MOVEMENT, HAD ASPIRED TO BECOME PRIME MINISTER AND PARTY CHAIRMAN BUT WAS VETOED BY THE PARTY'S MODERATE WING. STEEN IS STILL AN IMPORTANT FIGURE IN NORWEGIAN POLITICS, HOWEVER, AND HAS LOST NONE OF HIS AMBITION TO LEAD THE COUNTRY.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1526

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 OSLO 1890

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THEIR IS A VERY REAL POSSIBILITY OF A NON-SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT IN 1977. THIS HAS ALREADY SPARKED NATIONAL DEBATE AND CAUSED CONSTERNATION WITHIN THE LABOR PARTY WHOSE LEADERS HAVE BEGUN TO MANEUVER FOR CONTROL OVER THE PARTY'S ELECTORAL PLATFORM. ON THE ONE HAND, STEEN AND THE LEFT WING OF THE PARTY BELIEVE THAT LABOR SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE TRUE TO ITS SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY AND CONTINUE PUSHING SOCIAL WELFARE. ON THE OTHER SIDE, THE PARTY'S CENTRISTS, HEADED BY NORDLI, BELIEVE THAT THE PARTY WILL HAVE TO SHIFT SLIGHTLY CENTERWARD IF IT IS TO AVOID LOSING ITS INCREASINGLY AFFLUENT CONSTITUENCY TO THE CENTER PARTIES. A CHANGE TO A NON-SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT NEXT YEAR WOULD HAVE MINIMAL DIRECT EFFECT ON NORWEGIAN POLICIES OF INTEREST TO THE U.S.

3. U.S.-NORWEGIAN RELATIONS

FOR THE PAST THIRTY YEARS, NORWAY HAS BEEN ONE OF OUR MOST LOYAL ALLIES IN WESTERN EUROPE. THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF OUR TWO NATIONS PARALLEL EACH OTHER CLOSELY; BILATERAL PROBLEMS ARE INFREQUENT AND SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES DO NOT EXIST. THE EXTREMELY CLOSE FRIENDSHIP THAT CHARACTERIZED THIS BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP ALLOWS FOR AN OPEN, CANDID EXCHANGE OF VIEWS. AMERICA'S MAJOR INTEREST IN NORWAY DERIVES FROM NORWAY'S STRATEGIC GEOGRAPHIC POSITION BORDERING THE USSR'S MAJOR KOLA PENINSULA MILITARY COMPLEX AND ASTRIDE THE SOVIET NORTHERN FLEET'S TWO MAIN EXITS TO THE ATLANTIC. THIS COMMON INTEREST IN NORWAY (SECURITY AND OUR BILATERAL MILITARY COOPERATION FORM THE NUCLEUS OF THE U.S.-NORWEGIAN RELATIONSHIP. THE DISCOVERY OF SUBSTANTIAL

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OIL AND NATURAL GAS RESERVES IN THE NORTH SEA OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS ADDS A NEW STRATEGIC DIMENSION TO OUR INTERESTS HERE. OUR RELATIONS ARE GIVEN STILL MORE DEPTH BY NORWAY'S STRONG COMMITMENT TO WESTERN DEMOCRACY AND BY THE BONDS OF BLOOD FORGED BY NORWEGIANS' EMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES.

NORWEGIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS, AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN U.S. NORWEGIAN RELATIONS, ARE COMPLEX AND OFTEN STRAINED DESPITE EFFORTS BY OSLO TO STEER A MODERATE, GOOD NEIGHBORLY COURSE. CURRENT DIFFICULTIES REVOLVE AROUND SOVIET/NORWEGIAN NEGOTIATIONS ON DELIMITATION OF THEIR BARENTS SEA BOUNDARY AND NORWEGIAN EFFORTS TO EXERCISE SOVEREIGNTY OVER SVALBARD, ON WHICH NORWAY HAS BEEN TURNING INCREASINGLY TO THE U.S. FOR SUPPORT. HOW TO HANDLE THE USSR IS A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR NORWAY; CONSEQUENTLY, HOW WE DEAL WITH THE RUSSIANS IS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST HERE.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS ARE POSITIVE AND U.S. NORWEGIAN TRADE IS GAINING MOMENTUM. ALTHOUGH A SMALL NATION, NORWAY'S MERCHANT FLEET IS THE FOURTH LARGEST IN THE WORLD AND CARRIES A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF ALL U.S. IMPORTS AND EXPORTS. HERE MAJOR NEW OIL RESOURCES

SHOULD MAKE NORWAY THE LARGEST NON-OPEC OIL EXPORTER BY THE EARLY 1980'S. HOWEVER, WITH AN ESSENTIALLY FULL EMPLOYMENT ECONOMY AND TRADITIONALLY CONSERVATIVE POPULATION THE NORWEGIANS ARE TAKING A CAUTIOUS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR OIL SO THAT THE RATE OF EXPLOITATION OF OIL RESERVES IS SLOWER THAN WE WOULD LIKE.

NORWAY. IS AN IMPRESSIVE PERFORMER ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE, ESPECIALLY WITH THE THIRD WORLD WHERE IT CULTIVATES A "BRIDGE-BUILDER" IMAGE BETWEEN LDCS AND INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS AND ADMINISTERS A GENEROUS, NON-POLITICAL FOREIGN AID PROGRAM. IT IS COMMITTED TO THE GOAL OF GIVING 1 PERCENT OF GNP IN FOREIGN AID AND IS COMMITTED TO \$230 MILLION OR 0.74 PERCENT OF GNP IN 1976. AS A MARITIME AND FISHING NATION, NORWAY IS KEENLY INTERESTED IN A SUCCESSFUL LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE AND WORKS CLOSELY WITH THE UNITED STATES TO THAT END. NORWAY ALSO PLAYS A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS SUCH AS DISARMEMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE LABOR GOVERNMENT UNDER PRIME MINISTER ODVAR

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NORDLI ARE EXCELLENT. WHEN HE BECAME PRIME MINISTER, NORDLI RETAINED KNUT FRYDENLUND AS FOREIGN MINISTER AND APPOINTED ROLF HANSEN AS HIS NEW MINISTER OF DEFENSE. HANSEN IS A POLITICALLY INFLUENTIAL TRUSTED AND COMPETENT COLLEAGUE WITH IMPECCABLE LABOR PARTY CREDENTIALS BUT HE LACKS EXPERIENCE IN DEFENSE AFFAIRS. JOHAN HOLST, FORMER ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH DIRECTOR OF THE NORWEGIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND A RESEARCH ASSOCIATE AT HARVARD'S CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, WAS NAMED AS HANSEN'S DEPUTY. HOLST'S APPOINTMENT PROVIDES THE NEW MINISTER WITH FIRST-RATE DEFENSE EXPERTISE AND STRENGTHENS THE TRADITIONALLY WEAKER CIVILIAN SIDE OF THE DEFENSE MINISTRY. BREMER

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